PATENT

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PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Sir:

Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Prior to the examination of the above-identified continuation application, entry of the following amendments and consideration of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Amendments to the specification begin on page 2 of this paper.

Amendments to the claims begin on page 3 of this paper.

Remarks begin on page 8 of this paper.

Currently amended text is presented with markings to indicate changes made relative to parent application no. 09/394,142, filed September 9, 1999, by underlining of added text and strikethrough of deleted text. All changes are shown in bold text.